

## Book reviews

**Trichomoniasis—Diagnose und Therapie** (Trichomoniasis—Diagnosis and Therapy). By J. KOLMAN. 1974. Pp. 98, 7 figs. Wilhelm Maudrich, Vienna (140 schillings)

The parasite *Trichomonas vaginalis*, one of the commonest causes of vaginal discharge and genito-urinary symptoms in women, can also be found in the urethral and prostatic secretions of a number of men, where it is more likely to be symptomless. For an organism that is so frequently the cause of discomfort and unhappiness, it has been seriously neglected by scientific research workers and the majority of the investigations into its natural history, structure, metabolism, infectivity, and treatment have been undertaken by clinicians. Despite the widespread use of a very effective remedy in metronidazole the condition does not appear to decline in prevalence and it is obvious that further research work is essential before the disease can be effectively controlled throughout the world.

This monograph of 98 pages comes from Vienna, but the author's clinical and academic credentials are not stated. The author claims that the objectives of the volume are essentially practical and are intended to close the obvious gaps in the diagnosis and recognition of trichomoniasis. European literature only is considered and it is surprising that so many textbooks are quoted some of which are a decade or more old. Much of the recent work is not included in the references and in places the text is out of date.

There is a thorough review of the anatomy and physiology of the vagina but the rest of the genito-urinary system is ignored, particularly the urethra and prostate in men. There follows a detailed description of the cell biology of *Trichomonas vaginalis*, illustrated by some black and white microphotographs. The clinical section is less sound. The majority of readers will have difficulty in accepting an association between infestation with trichomonads and rheumatic disease, and the author puts forward a great many untested and highly imaginative explanations of the relationship of the parasite with a wide variety of clinical conditions.

The section on microscopical diagnosis is very detailed and contains further black and white photographs. Unfortunately little or no information is given about culture of the parasite in artificial media although staining techniques are described in detail.

This book cannot be recommended for general reading about trichomoniasis. Much of it is likely to lead to confusion, especially the clinical sections. Cases are described in which it is claimed that the parasite was transmitted by underclothes, domestic bath water, and public baths, but satisfactory evidence to support these statements is not given. Moreover, case histories are also cited in detail in

which it is claimed that infestation with trichomonads was responsible for hepato-splenomegaly, cachexia, arthritis, and a variety of other clinical conditions. The majority of those who have studied trichomonal disease will find such statements totally unacceptable and, indeed, even dangerous.  
R. D. Catterall

**A Colour Atlas of Venereology.** By ANTHONY WISDOM. 1973. Pp. 349, 556 col. figs (Wolfe Medical Atlases No. 6). Wolfe, London (£6.00)

Nearly all venereologists have collections of their favourite slides which they use for teaching purposes. Perhaps most of them consider that these deserve publication.

Doctor Wisdom is to be congratulated on getting on with the job and publishing his collection. This forms the best set of illustrations on the subject that has been published and is the first comprehensive colour atlas of venereology. The quality of the illustrations is high; most of the genital lesions that are seen in the practice of venereology are shown, and shown extremely well. The index is comprehensive.

The author rightly stresses the need for privacy when patients are interviewed and examined. Because every attendance at a clinic is a confidential matter, it is particularly unfortunate that some of the illustrations are of unmasked and entirely recognizable faces. Presumably the publishers have taken legal advice on this matter, and have decided to present the material this way as a justifiable risk. If so, such presentation would appear to be of questionable taste in a textbook of venereology. If such legal advice has not been taken it would appear very strongly advisable that it should.

There are some features that merit attention in subsequent editions. With regard to terminology: the word 'aetiology' is used where 'cause' is meant. 'Corneal microscopy' is said to be indicated in suspected congenital syphilis, and in uveitis, where 'slit-lamp microscopy' is what is meant. Lesions of secondary syphilis are described as asymptomatic, while it is the patient who does or does not complain (not the disease).

*Chlamydia*, where used as a genus name, can only be singular. This group of organisms is grown in cell culture (not tissue culture). It is superfluous to write of the sugar fermentation reactions of gonococci grown in culture; how else would they be grown?

There are obvious errors: the Table (p. 74) entitled 'the natural history of syphilitic infection' is over-simplified; it omits early latent syphilis and relapsing secondary syphilis. Figure 234 is of a Pappenheim-stained smear, but the legend states that Gram-negative rods can be seen.